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Assistant Director, Intelligence Coordination

Assistant Director, Research and Reports

Staff Study on FDD's Contribution to Economic Intelligence

I. The Problem.

To improve FDD's contribution to economic intelligence.

II. Facts Bearing on the Problem.

1. FDD now conceives of its primary function as the "exploitation" of foreign language materials. The job of foreign language specialists is considered to be a mixture of translation, evaluation, and analysis. On the basis of general knowledge of the broad area of research that ORR is concerned with, FDD specialists attempt to screen foreign language materials for selected information that, in their judgment, will be useful to ORR. These selections are translated and passed on to ORR in the form of reports. While specific translations are made on request, this function is considered subsidiary to exploitation and is consequently given a lower priority. Comprehensive indexing of foreign language materials is likewise delegated to a secondary position.

2. There is a serious scarcity of linguistic talent and of competence in economic analysis, particularly as applied to Soviet areas. The individual who possesses both skills with equal competence is almost unique. The use of both types of personnel must be economized.

3. Foreign language materials processed through FDD are not being indexed directly into the central library system. Although an indexing mechanism is provided, it is not amalgamated into the system covering all other material. Moreover, the indexing systems are not parallel.

4. A substantial backlog of unfilled requests for translation has accumulated. Even this backlog is not a full indication of the deficiencies in translation services since many additional requests would be made if the translation process were less time-consuming.

III. Discussion of the Problem.

The problem of utilizing the vast fund of economic information buried in Soviet language materials may be broken down into three sub-problems. The first is to provide a comprehensive indexing system that will facilitate rapid and efficient location of the kinds of materials that are most relevant to economic research under way. The second is to provide a service for rapid translation of materials that ORR selects

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as most important. The third is to incorporate information effectively into the research stream. ORR feels that best use of scarce talent will be made if FDD focusses on the indexing and translating services while ORR undertakes selection of materials to be translated and evaluation and analysis of that information.

The process of screening materials properly rests with analysts having primary competence in economic intelligence research and secondary, though substantial, foreign language competence. These analysts should be ORR personnel for two important reasons. First, only analysts within ORR can be familiar with ORR's working research program. It is impossible for ORR to indicate its translation needs through guide-type requirements placed with FDD. Such requirements can never be either general or specific enough to cover the shifting emphasis that is dictated by the progress of economic research and by the changing nature of basic intelligence problems. Information that is critical today may be extraneous next month; information whose value is not appreciated now may be realized as highly important as research develops. The fact that ORR has levied requirements on FDD in the past should not be taken as implying that this procedure is satisfactory. It has been used because other methods for locating information, such as an efficient indexing system, have not been at hand. Second, personnel with competence in economic analysis, being highly scarce, should be used primarily in economic intelligence work, i.e., should be assigned to ORR. On both counts it does not make sense to transfer the screening portion of intelligence exploitation to FDD. In addition, FDD's contribution to the intelligence community is certainly weakened if language specialists are required to develop all manner of secondary qualifications.

IV. Recommendations.

1. That FDD arrange with OGD a system for indexing all foreign language documents relating to economic intelligence and for integrating this index into the central indexing system.
2. That more satisfactory arrangements be made for making foreign language materials now located in FDD physically available to substantive analysts for exploitation.
3. That FDD perform professional translation duties as required in support of the producing offices and such selection and interpretation as is incidental to the indexing process.
4. That FDD abandon the function of "exploiting" foreign documents for ORR.
5. That, during the period of transition required to fulfill the above recommendations, the present ORR standing requirements (oral and

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written) be utilized as guides for incorporating foreign language materials into the present OGD indexing system.

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